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ON THE BREEDING HABITS OF SOME ARIZONA BIRDS.

First Paper.—*Icterus parisorum*.

BY W. E. D. SCOTT.

During the spring and summer of 1884 it was my good fortune to make the acquaintance of a number of birds whose breeding habits are at best but little known, and the following data give some of the results of such observations. Most of the notes on the species in question were made at a point, to be more fully described presently, on the San Pedro slope of the Santa Catalina Mountains, in Pinal County, Arizona Territory.

Here Scott's Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) arrives about the middle of April, and is at once among the more conspicuous birds, both for its brilliant plumage and rich song. Few birds sing more incessantly, and in fact I do not recall a species in the Eastern or Middle States that is to be heard as frequently. The males are of course the chief performers, but now and again, near a nest, while watching the birds, I would detect a female singing the same glad song, only more softly. At the earliest daybreak and all day long, even when the sun is at its highest, and during the great heat of the afternoon, its very musical whistle is one of the few bird songs that are ever present.

From the time of its arrival until July 29 I heard the song daily, even hourly, and during the height of the breeding season often many were singing within hearing at the same time.

This has been called 'a desert species,' and most Arizona birds might fall under the same grouping, at times, I suppose, but my experience with it is so very directly to the contrary that a word as to the surroundings of the home of this Oriole, as found by me, will perhaps give a better idea to the reader.

There is a cañon that begins high up in the Santa Catalinas, and, dividing the hills and table lands on either side of it by its deep furrow, it extends for two miles or more, where it joins the valley of the San Pedro River. It is the upper or more elevated part of this cañon with which we have to do, at an altitude varying from four thousand to five thousand feet. The hills on either side are high, the cañon generally quite narrow. Live oaks are the trees of the hills and hillsides, and reach in places to the bed of the cañon. Here in parts are groves of cottonwoods and sycamores, and some cedars, and, with the exception of the very bed of the cañon, where for a part of the year is a brook, the grass covers the surface of the ground. The brook begins to dry up in its exposed parts early in May, but all summer long there is running water for at least a mile in the cottonwood grove, and in a number of places, even during the driest part of the year, the water rises to the surface, making 'tanks,' as they are called. Along this running water and about the 'tanks,' bird life is very abundant, and here, surely no desert, is the summer home of many Scott's Orioles. There is very little cactus, and none of the 'chollas' that are so very characteristic of the deserts of the neighboring region.

After August 7 I missed the song, although the birds were abundant until the 10th of that month, and I saw a single bird or so for the following three days. Then I supposed they were all gone, but on the 14th of September, about dusk, I started one, an adult male, from a yucca where he had evidently gone to roost. He scolded angrily at me from the dead limb of a cedar near by for a few moments, when I left him to go to bed. Again, on the 18th of September, I heard a male in full song, and going closer found a party of four together, three old males and a young one of the year. This is my last note of their occurrence at this point.

There are many yuccas (*Yucca baccata*) in the cañon and on the hillside, none of them exceeding ten feet in height, and it was in one of these, only a few feet from a wood near where some one passed daily, and close to a 'tank' of water, that on May 24 I found the first nest. It was carefully concealed under the half dead and dry leaves that hung downward close to the trunk of the plant. Two of the long pointed blades had still been green enough to allow the pulp to be picked away, and the tough fibers had then been frayed and used as a sort of starting point or foundation for the structure which was thus 'sewed'—I know no more appropriate word—fast to the edges of the leaf. I only caught a glimpse of the female and was not sure of the bird till later, when both parents were identified to my satisfaction.

The nest contained three fresh eggs, though four is the usual number, as three nests found during the next few days proved. These nests were all built in yuccas, none were far from water, and, strangely, for a rather shy and suspicious bird, all were within ten feet of the road. The last, that of May 30, to be spoken of in detail presently, was so near a much used trail, that the passer by might have touched it with the hand. The following descriptions of the nests in detail are copied from my notes:

"Nest of May 24. Built in a yucca, four feet from the ground. Sewed to the edges of five dead leaves which, hanging down parallel to trunk of the plant, entirely concealed the nest. Semi-pensile. Composed externally of fibers of the yucca and fine grasses. Lined with soft grasses and threads of cotton-waste throughout. The walls are very thin, at bottom not more than half an inch, and on the sides from one-eighth to a quarter of an inch thick. The whole nest was rather closely woven and very strong. Inside depth, three and a half inches. Inside diameter, four inches. The whole cup-shaped. Contains three fresh eggs. The female was killed flying from the nest, or the set would have been completed. Eggs bluish-white in color, with a cluster of chocolate-brown spots, and others of lighter lilac-brown at the larger end, spotted very sparsely all over, mainly with a still lighter shade of the latter color, though a very few of these dispersed markings are also dark chocolate-brown. They measure .98 × .69, .92 × .65, 1.00 × .73 inches, respectively. I have called this nest semi-pensile, as the edges of the yucca

leaves are not simply attached to the rim or top edge of the nest, but are 'sewed' to the *sides* of the structure—one blade for three inches, three for four inches, and the other two for more than two inches and a half. The nest is sewed to the blades or leaves about seven inches from where they join the trunk of the plant, and the blades are about twenty-two inches long."

"Nest of May 27. Built in yucca, about four feet from ground. Nest sewed to the edges of three leaves, all on one side of the structure and close together, being about three-quarters of an inch apart. Other leaves project downward at an angle of about 45°, and the nest rests on them, as it would on the slanting roof of a house. It is therefore not at all pensile. Is built of grasses, yucca fiber, and has cotton twine woven into its walls. Inside it is lined to within half an inch of the rim with small pieces of cotton batting, some cotton twine, and a little very soft grass. It is sewed to the edges of each of the three leaves it rests on for six inches. The walls on the sides are an inch, and at the bottom an inch and a half thick. The general inside shape is oval, the greatest diameter being four and the least three and a half inches. The greatest depth inside is three and a half inches. The walls on sides sewed to leaves are about six inches in depth, and on the side rising from the leaves four inches. It contains four fresh eggs, that recall those of the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelæus phœniceus*) in general appearance. They measure as follows: .96 × .68, .98 × .66, .92 × .68, .96 × .68. The nest is sewed to the leaves about ten inches from where they join the trunk of the plant, and the leaves are about eighteen inches long. Other leaves hanging downward above those on which the nest rests almost conceal it."

"Nest of May 30. Built in yucca, four feet from the ground. Composed of yucca fiber and fine grasses, and is very similar to that of May 24 in general appearance. The bottom of the structure inside is lined with a soft mat of cotton-waste. Semi-pensile, being sewed to six leaves of the plant, three of which almost conceal the nest from view. The nest measures: depth inside, four inches; depth outside, five and a half inches; inside diameter at top, four inches. The general shape of the interior is that of a rather large and shallow cup. Contains four eggs, partially incubated. Ground-color bluish-white, with much the same colored markings as those of the nest of May 24. Their

general shape differs, however, as they are much more pointed at one end and flattened at the other, the shape reminding one of the eggs of some of the Plovers. They measure .92 × .71, .93 × .78, .91 × .70, .88 × .69. The sewing of the nest reaches on two of the leaves four inches; on one, five inches; on one, three inches; and on the other two, an inch and a half. The nest is fastened to the leaves about five inches from where they join the stem or trunk of the plant, and the leaves to which it is fastened are rather more than twenty inches long.

"Second nest of May 30. Similar in location to the first nest of same date and built in same kind of plant. Composed of grasses and yucca fiber, the later mainly, and has in the inside at bottom a very thick lining of cotton-waste. Is semi-pensile, and is sewed to four green leaves—to one for six inches, the entire wall of the nest for its whole length being fastened. A second is sewed only for half an inch to the wall very close to the *bottom* of the nest. A third is very similar in its point of attachment, only that it is fastened for a little more than an inch, and the last is fastened for three inches in the ordinary way. The nest is very uneven in shape externally, being fully six inches deep on one side and not more than two inches deep on the other. The nest has an interior diameter of four and a quarter inches, and is very shallow and cup-shaped, being only two and a quarter inches deep at its deepest part. Four fresh eggs are the contents, and they vary only in not being so pointed as the other set of May 30. They are rather larger than any others measured, being 1.01 × .72, 1.02 × .70, .97 × .70, 1.02 × .73. The general shape of the nest is an uneven, one-sided cup, with its greatest external diameter four and three-quarters inches. It is attached to the leaves about seven inches from the trunk of the plant, and the leaves to which it is attached are twenty-six inches long. It is built but little more than three feet from the ground, and partially concealed by over-hanging leaves."

The cotton and cotton-waste were doubtless picked up by the birds about the house and near a mill but a little distance away, where the waste is used in polishing machinery, etc.

Some pairs of the birds, at least, raise two broods during the season. A fifth nest, completing my series, was found just finished on June 26, and all the eggs, three in number, were deposited by July 1, when the nest was taken. It was built in a

sycamore overhanging the wood-road before mentioned, and about forty yards from water. It differs greatly from any of the others, as the appended notes show.

"Nest of July 1. Built in a sycamore tree, about eighteen feet from the ground. Pensile, being attached to the ends of the twigs. It is composed externally entirely of the fibers of dead yucca leaves, and there are hanging to and built into the walls four rather small dead leaves of this plant, that are partly frayed, so that the fiber is used in weaving them into the structure. The interior is lined with soft fine grasses, and only two or three shreds of cotton-waste appear here and there in the lining. The walls vary from a quarter to half an inch in thickness. The whole structure is very symmetrical and is a half sphere in shape. Inside the greatest depth is two and a half and the greatest diameter four inches. The entire set of eggs was laid, as the nest had been watched for a number of days; and the female was killed, when the nest was taken, and dissected. Three eggs compose the set, and differ from those already described only in being of a deeper bluish-white ground-color. They measure .88 × .72, .98 × .70, .90 × .74, being therefore rather rounder in general outline than any of the other sets. This nest is attached to the twigs from which it hangs very much like that of a Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus baltimore*)."

Ten minutes' walk from the house would have reached any of these five nests, and three of them were within a hundred and fifty yards of one another.

The first young that I met with, that had left the nest, were seen on July 2, and on July 4 I saw many fully fledged, and apparently shifting for themselves. The following note is dated July 24: "Young males, fully fledged, evidently of the first brood, were singing very softly." "A young male taken, beginning to moult from 'first' plumage; the first noted in this condition."

The species here is a very common one, and it seems possible that after a few years' association with houses and people it may no longer be the shy, suspicious bird of the present, but become as familiar as others of the genus have. On their first arrival they were constantly in the oaks overhanging the house, and only seemed alarmed if too closely observed.

That they do not always build in the yuccas, though doubtless that is the favorite nesting place, the nest of July 1 proves, and I

feel confident that certain Orioles' nests that I have seen in the misseltoe of the oaks, and others pendant from the oak boughs themselves, are, from their general character, those of the species in question.

BIRD NAMES OF THE SELISH, PAH-UTA AND SHOSHONI INDIANS.

BY W. J. HOFFMAN, M. D.

MOST of the data herewith submitted were obtained from the Selish, or Flathead, Indians, in Western Montana, who occupy a fertile region known as the Jocko Valley, which is bounded on the west by the Rocky Mountains. Other information was also obtained from the Pah-Uta Indians in the vicinity of Pyramid Lake, Nevada; from the Uta Indians of Los Pinos, Colorado, and the Shoshoni at Fort Hall, Idaho.

To obtain the names of birds from any aboriginal tribe is no slight task. The living specimen, of any given species, may be very familiar to them, but should the dead specimen be presented for identification, there is uncertainty and doubt, and frequently it will be impossible for the collector to receive any but a generic term, if even that. The reason for this is, that Indians, while close observers regarding flight, habits, or voice of the bird, are at a loss unless they kill a species and instantly pronounce their decision, the association of their own name with it being based upon one of these peculiarities. Some marked genera are readily identified by all the members of the tribe; and even species have peculiarities in color-markings, the shape of the bill, legs, etc., so that one may not always find the difficulties referred to.

There does not appear to be a division of birds, among any of our tribes, into Land Birds and Water Birds. But, on the contrary, there is a distinction between *large birds* and *small birds*. The latter are called *tsin-ka'-la* by the Dakota; *si-su'* by the Washo; *nu-tsi-pa'* by the Pah-Uta; and *ha'-wits* by the Uta. These names include even the Grouse and Wild Turkey, but should raptorial birds be referred to, though smaller than the last-